

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-02 H-01 SY-04 PA-01

PRS-01 FBIE-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 /033 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1941

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 0627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPRS YO (BENTLEY, GLORIA LIND; WATERMAN, ANN JUDSON)

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

REF: STATE 31338 AND BELGRADE 613

1. EMBASSY POL COUNSELOR CALLED FEB 12 ON MIODRAG KELIC OF FSFA, OFFICE FOR NORTH AMERICA, TO DISCUSS DETENTION OF BENTLEY AND WATERMAN. AFTER DISCUSSING DETAILS OF CASE AS KNOWN AT THIS TIME, POL COUNSELOR SAID REASON FOR TAKING MATTER UP ON POLITICAL LEVEL WAS TWOFOLD:

(A) GIVEN THE POTENTIAL OF SUCH A CASE FOR ADVERSE IMPACT ON RELATIONS, EMBASSY WANTED OFFICE FOR NORTH AMERICA TO BE AWARE OF THE CASE AT THE EARLIEST MOMENT.

(B) ACKNOWLEDGING THAT A MATTER SUCH AS THIS IS COMPLETELY WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMPETENT YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES, EMBASSY WANTED TO MAKE KNOWN ITS VIEW THAT, SHOULD SUCH BE POSSIBLE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF YUGOSLAV LAW, THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME WOULD BE SIMPLY THE EXPULSION OF THE TWO PERSONS INVOLVED. THIS WOULD MINIMIZE ADVERSE IMPACT AND REMOVE WHAT COULD BE A CONTINUING PROBLEM SHOULD ONE OR BOTH OF THE PERSONS BE HELD DURING A PROTRACTED INVESTIGATION AND POSSIBLE TRIAL.

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2. AS POSSIBLE FACTORS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN

EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPULSION, POL COUNSELOR SAID BENTLEY HAD TOLD EMBASSY CONSUL THAT WATERMAN IS UNDER CONTINUING TREATMENT IN BERKLEY, CALIFORNIA, FOR EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY, AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN UNDERTAKING AN ACTIVITY WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE DEFY RATIONAL EXPLANATION.

3. KELIC (WHO SERVED IN CHICAGO WITH THE YUGOSLAV CONSULATE) SAID THAT THE PERSON WHO ALLEGEDLY PROVIDED THE OFFENDING PAMPHLETS TO WATERMAN, DRAGISA KASIKOVIC, IS JUST ABOUT THE WORST KIND OF EMIGRE ONE COULD FIND, AND THAT HE (KELIC) COULD WELL BELIEVE KASIKOVIC CAPABLE OF "USING" A POLITICALLY NAIVE PERSON FOR HIS OWN ENDS. TO KELIC'S QUESTION REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WATERMAN AND KASIKOVIC, AND WHETHER BENTLEY AND KASIKOVIC WERE ACQUAINTED, POL COUNSELOR PLED IGNORANCE. KELIC SAID THAT HE CERTAINLY HOPED THAT SHOULD IT BE FOUND WATERMAN HAD BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY KASIKOVIC, THAT COMPETENT US AUTHORITIES WOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT SINCE IT WOULD CLEARLY BE A VIOLATION OF THE LAW. POL COUNSELOR SAID HE IGNORANT OF ILLINOISE STATUTES AND COULD NOT COMMENT.

4. KELIC EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HAVING BEEN INFORMED OF THIS PROBLEM, AND SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY INFORM HIS SUPERIORS AND BE IN TOUCH WITH THE FSFA CONSULAR SECTION AND THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT REGARDING THE COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATION. HE AGREED THAT THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS WOULD BE IF THE PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED BY THEIR EXPULSION, BUT SAID THAT WOULD OF COURSE DEPEND ON WHAT THE INVESTIGATION FOUND.

5. WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT DODER HAS BEEN ALERTED TO CASE AND IS MAKING INQUIRIES. EMBASSY PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELGRA00627
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750051-0008
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750251/aaaabtwk.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 31338, 75 AND BELGRADE 613
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by KelleyW0>; RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DETENTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS
TAGS: CPRS, YO, US, (BENTLEY, GLORIA LIND), (WATERMAN, ANN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006